

Parent Involvement Committee

Minutes - February 28, 2023

A meeting of the Waterloo Region District School Board **Parent Involvement Committee (PIC)** was held on Tuesday, February 28, at 6:30 pm, virtually on Google Meet, with the following members in attendance:

Present:

Trustees: M. Radlein

Board Staff: D. Ballantyne, E. Dougan-McKenzie, M. Hoare, H, McKinna

PIC/WRAPSC Members: J. Araujo, S. Awan, H. Brar, A. deVries, S. Heroux, T. Jamieson, J. Lawrie, L. Lovelace, A. Misra, C. Needler, S. Rehan, A. Schuitema, P. Shaw

Regrets: j. chanicka, G. Eriamiatoe, S. Goel, S. Miller, S. Rizik, A. Russell, G. Shantz, N. Sidiqi, T. Yates

Welcome & Territorial Acknowledgement, Euis Dougan-McKenzie, Executive Officer welcomed everyone to the meeting and offered a Territorial Acknowledgement.

Approval of Agenda

J. Lawrie motioned to approve February 28, 2023 PIC Agenda, seconded by P. Shaw with the following additions:

- a. How would a PIC member request or suggest an agenda item for the meeting?
- b. Add to Subcommittee Discussion, have been asked for 2 PIC members to volunteer to participate on PRO Grant Evaluation Committee.

The agenda was approved and passed with the changes.

Approval of Minutes

J. Araujo motioned to approve December 6, 2022, PIC Minutes, seconded by J. Lawrie with the following changes:

- a. Future Agenda Items, P. Shaw, When creating the PIC agenda, keep in mind how PIC is being engaged, is PIC being asked to do something or provide input and not just receive information? Hoping to avoid presentations where PIC only receives information. E. Dougan-McKenzie summarized that PIC meetings should be a place for generative conversation and an immediate feedback loop, not just downloading information.



The minutes were approved and passed with the changes.

Director's Update, Euis Dougan- McKenzie, Executive Officer

P Shaw requested that during the Director's Update (or Director's representative) if they could indicate what is being asked of PIC Committee members and how they can provide it.

E. Dougan-McKenzie acknowledged PIC is requesting generative conversations and an immediate feedback loop. Suggestion to bring an upcoming issue or topic and ask for PIC's feedback.

J. Araujo indicated it would be more fulfilling if feedback was sought prior to decisions being made and the feedback could affect some change. Especially for items that directly affect the student/parent community.

A. Misra asked what does the board want to hear from PIC? Does the board have questions or consultation they would like PIC to input on? Their understanding was the new strategic plan has a focus of more engagement with families. Can there be a standing item added to the agenda regarding how parents are being engaged in the implementation of the strategic plan and seeking advice and feedback from parents to do that effectively?

E. Dougan-McKenzie offered an example that the Committee of the Whole meeting on February 13, 2023, there was discussion about the changes to ISP. If something like that was being developed would you the board to bring it to a PIC meeting for consultation and feedback?

P. Shaw, if that's the information that the school board wants from PIC that makes sense. It depends on what issues the school board wants input from PIC.

J. Araujo, it's more fulfilling if it was at a time where the feedback could affect some change and items that directly affect the student/parent community. That's where a conversation and feedback could be given.

A. Misra, questions/consultation - what does the board want to hear from PIC? There was intention in the last strategic plan for there to be more engagement with families. Consider adding a standing item on agenda regarding how parents are being engaged in the implementation of the strategic plan.

The board is trying to establish a new way of working in the context of broader discussion. How can we have an effective meetings. Agree that this provides an opportunity for full and true consultation and will bring ideas at the beginning stages and not when they are done.

Recently held Community Tables with community organizations, regional and municipal government leaders, including CAOs from Region, Cities and all townships, F&CS, CYPT, Smart Waterloo and other



community groups. Looking at how we can help to lift up community development in a way that speaks to food and security, housing and other issues that fall outside the WRDSB mandate but that affect students.

Three strategies will be developed that are regional in scope and will bring forward some of these goals, including supporting the right to read report and finding different ways to support students as they learn to read by the end of grade 2 or age 7. What are the different things we can do with our community partners to support this? Are there community organizations that can support reading circle in their mother language? Care packages for new families - where they receive a library card and information about programs and initiatives to support reading, etc. First draft will go to participants that were not at the initial Community Tables meeting. We'll also share key topics and strategies with PIC.

PIC members:

Principals are saying there is discussion the home reading program may be cancelled or not used. At Chicopee Hills reading program is being revised and a new reading program is being implemented. Principal at students' school something new is coming. Right to Read what plan is in place and to be implemented for Right to Read program

E. Dougan-McKenzie - There will be increased support to help students and schools. After school day and on weekends and it's not meant to disrupt current initiatives and programs. Will follow up regarding details on what's happening with the Home Reading Programs.

M. Hoare - There are reviews to ensure our Home Reading resources are culturally responsive and accessible for our learners and families.

Would it be beneficial to have a PIC members on this committee to reflect parental thoughts or input?

Look at how we can incorporate PIC members earlier in the process and discuss with other participants.

Policy Review

PIC Policy Review Guidelines - designed similar to Equity Framework, met with Stephanie Reidel and came to PIC and did the presentation for PIC.

New process, board sharing the links to the policies being reviewed and asking PIC members to please go in take a look and share your feedback through the online process.

Thank you Anjali for sharing history and background, reflecting on work that was done.

E. Dougan- McKenzie offered to connect with S. Reidel about the Policy Review package that everyone received to ensure there is clear instruction so PIC can provide feedback and meet March 31 deadline.



M. Radlein - people would like to be part of the process and give feedback.

Trustee Report, M. Radlein, Trustee

Trustee Maedith Radlein shared the Trustee Report (in the Agenda package) which provided updates on Committee of the Whole and Board Meetings since December 6, 2022.

December

Committee of the Whole

- Delegates addressed the request for the WRDSB to adopt the IHRA definition of anti-semitism

Board Meeting

- A request was made for staff and students to wear masks in schools.
- There are staffing challenges in all employee groups with many “Fail to Fills”.
- Covid effects - student absenteeism is declining; student aggression is increasing; Staffing challenges.
- The Board Improvement Equity Plan was presented. It is provided by the Ministry of Education as a school board planning tool. It sets out province-wide goals and performance indicators in four key areas: Achievement; Human Rights; Mental Health; & Pathways/Transitions. Each school will set goals based on EQAO data, reading records etc.

January

Committees of the Whole

- A motion to request that Grand River Transit provide free fares for students who don't qualify for bussing was passed.
- The bus driver shortage is improving but is not yet resolved.
- There was an open letter issued by the Board in response to a delegation which sought information on the choice of books in elementary school libraries as well as information about
- Student census done in June 2022.
- The Chicopee Hills traffic issue continues to be a challenge. Resolution involves working with the Region and City both of which have different responsibilities for the roads.

February

Committees of the Whole

- A delegation sought information as to why the Integrated Support Program at Westvale is being closed. They were very concerned at the lack of communication around the issue. The issue was referred back to staff for reconsideration
- The Remote Learning program will be continued next year.
- A letter will be sent to the Ministry of Transportation about the Chicopee Hills P.S. traffic issue. It involves requesting the redefinition of the term “school zone”.

Trustee Radlein welcomed questions.

J. Araujo shared their concern of the trend in type of delegations at Board meetings that are becoming more common, hateful and harmful. There are so many other important topics and issues that the board could focus on. Really appreciate your contributions at the board table.

Trustee Radlein hopes the delegation focus shifts to focus on students.
PIC members echoed J. Araujo's comments and thanks to Trustee Radlein.

PIC questions for Trustee Radlein:

Q. Is curriculum standard across WRDSB, some students are missing out on a STEM fair

A. Trustee Radlein - There is a common curriculum but opportunities vary from school to school depending on staff and community volunteer involvement.

Treasurer Report, J. Lawrie, PIC Treasurer

Jillian Lawrie shared the [PIC Treasurer's Report](#). It can be found in the Agenda package.
\$0 have been spent, report is the same as December 6, 2023 meeting

Parent Engagement Funds - Central Account, Budget \$11,447, \$0 spent.

Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) - Director's Account Budget, \$5,000, \$0 spent.

Trustee Radlein suggested/asked if it's possible to set the agenda in May for next year so in September things can start more quickly. PIC members likes this idea.

Noted that PIC would like to use part of May meeting for planning for next year.

PIC member suggested that PIC start with the strategic plan and determine what parent perspectives are needed on that work. The Board would need to guide this process and also do the work.

Subcommittee Discussion

Q. Is there an expectation that PIC members are meeting outside of the established dates?

A. Subcommittees are separate committees that meet outside of the four formal PIC meetings.

PIC this year is meant to focus on renewal and clarify the respective roles and responsibilities of different parent groups.

Current subcommittees:

- Membership Recruitment & Onboarding Subcommittee (for 2023-2024 school year)
- PRO Grant Subcommittee

E. Dougan- McKenzie to confirm PIC participation in WRDSB committees.



Q. Part of PIC to advocate for children with special needs where children are struggling for resources. What committees are available to do this? That will teach children about neurodiverse children?

PRO Grant Evaluation Committee PIC volunteers - J. Araujo, L. Lovelace, S. Awan, J. Lawrie
Confirm who is available to participate once the details of the meetings are confirmed.

Suggestion for PIC to create an Equity and Inclusion Subcommittee, build community with racialized and marginalized families/caregivers. Racialized and marginalized parents and populations are represented at the schools but not represented on school councils. Ways to build and engage wider community. How to engage broader communities to have more of a say on school councils, looking at ways to bring people in. This committee could also have members from WRAPSC.

Equity and Inclusion Subcommittee - J. Araujo, S. Awan, Trustee Radlein

Trustee Radlein - It is an important topic how to get parents that aren't able to come or they don't feel comfortable but have something to contribute.

Membership Subcommittee - call went out from R. DiMartino, there may be other people that were interested in participating, check with R. DiMartino.

Other Agenda Items

Year End Celebrations

S. Heroux asked what is the Board's directive for end of year celebrations for elementary?

Concerns

- Schools councils and parents are not happy with "transition" celebrations, parents are taking things outside of the school resulting in it being less equitable.
- Each principal making different decisions and kids from different schools having different opportunities.
- Disparity of what different classrooms experience.
- What has been communicated so far and how we can support families and communities in celebrate achievements of students?

E. Dougan-McKenzie to confirm board's direction for Year-end Celebrations for Grade 6 and Grade 8 transitions.

PIC needs to be transparent and cautious about how and why we're selecting our speakers for events. Suggest going through a formal procurement process.

Confirmed Subcommittees:

1. Membership and Recruitment subcommittee



2. Equity and Engagement subcommittee

Future Agenda Items - All

Sara Heroux: Invited everyone to the next WRAPSC meeting on April 4, 2023 and future meetings. If you would like to join the meeting you can email wrapsc@gmail.com.

2022-2023 PIC Meeting Dates

(Google meet)

- May 16, 2023

J. Araujo motioned for the meeting to be adjourned and J. Lawrie seconded this motion.

The Parent Involvement Committee meeting adjourned at 9:07 pm.

